

BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

November 20, 1962

SUBJECT: Status of the Cuban Naval Quarantine

QUESTION: In the absence of some form of verification process, at what point is the naval quarantine to be withdrawn and what is to take its place?

CURRENT SITUATION REPORT:

The government has not so stated but it is generally reported in the press that, even in the absence of an international verification of the withdrawal of offensive weapons from Cuba, the United States will lift the quarantine if it is satisfied that the H-23 aircraft now in Cuba are returned to the Soviet Union.

SUGGESTED POINTS IN REPLY:

While we continue to press for means of obtaining absolute verification of the withdrawal from Cuba of all offensive weapons and suitable safeguards against re-introduction of such weapons, we are prepared to lift the naval quarantine around the island if we can receive reasonable assurance that the H-28s are removed. We consider reasonable assurance to be the type of verification we carried out in the "close alongside" inspection of deck cargoes permitted by Soviet ships when the missiles were withdrawn.

Close aerial surveillance would then replace the quarantine as the means of ascertaining that offensive weapons are not being reintroduced into Cuba. Aerial reconnaissance would be maintained until some UN plan satisfactory to us is agreed upon.